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Changing of the Guard: Betsy Steinberg Named As Head Of Illinois Film Office

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich has named Betsy Steinberg, VP/Development at Chicago's Towers Productions, as the new managing director for the Illinois Film Office. The appointment follows the resignation of Brenda Sexton, who joined the film office in 2003 following a career in commercial real estate. Sexton's tenure included a surge in production, and the passing of two competitive state tax credits, but she was criticized by some for a lack of industry experience.

"It's my pleasure to welcome Betsy Steinberg to the Illinois Film Office," said Gov. Blagojevich in a statement. "Her extensive industry expertise, both on the creative and business side, will be valuable as we build on the momentum we've generated over the last three years and continue growing the film industry in Illinois."

Andrew Ross, spokesperson for Illinois' Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, of which the film office is part, said the state would benefit from Steinberg's creative credentials, industry experience, and proven track record of attracting business. "The governor was looking for someone who was experienced in television and film production," he said.

"I am thrilled to be joining the Illinois Film Office and look forward to boosting the impact and magnitude of the film and entertainment industry across the state," said Steinberg in a statement. "I believe my production and development background in the television and film business will be a strong asset, and I am grateful to Governor Blagojevich for this opportunity."

While 2006 was a down year for studio films and television shooting in Illinois, there was an autumn uptick in commercial production, spurred in part by the generous new tax credit. The film office also hired a staffer, Megan Vidis, to concentrate on commercial production. "[Commercial production] certainly has been a point of emphasis and will continue to be a point of emphasis," said Ross.

Steinberg will assume responsibilities at the Illinois Film Office, starting January 31.